

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/077,962

Examiner

Amir Alavi

Applicant(s)

IMAMURA ET AL.

Art Unit

2621

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to The After Final Amendment received 28 November 2005.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-12 and 14-21 (now renumbered as 1-20).
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

- Applicant's election of Group I in the reply filed on 28 December 2004 is acknowledged. Because applicant did not distinctly and specifically point out the supposed errors in the restriction requirement, the election has been treated as an election without traverse (MPEP § 818.03(a)).
- This application is in condition for allowance except for the presence of claims 22-26 to being non-elected without traverse. Accordingly, claims 22-26 have been cancelled.
- An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.
- The application has been amended as follows: Claims 22-26 are cancelled.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

- The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The present invention is directed to a method for dividing an image region of a color image according to colors. Independent claims 1,9 and 14 identify the uniquely distinct feature, "for calculating plural composite distance indices for each pixel color in the color image based on the distance indices and the angle indices, the plural composite distance indices being associated with the plurality of representative colors; and classifying pixels in the color image into plural representative color regions associated with the plural representative colors, according to the composite distance indices, thereby dividing the image region of the color image into the plural representative color regions"; Independent claims 5 and 18 identify the uniquely distinct feature, "for calculating composite distance indices for each arbitrary individual color in the color space based on the distance indices and the angle indices, the plural composite distance indices being associated with the plurality of representative colors, respectively and

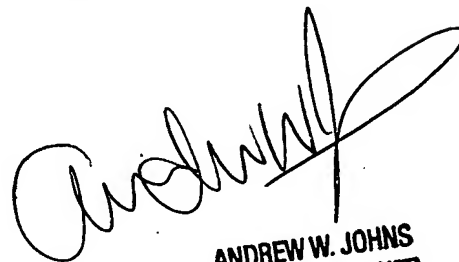
relating each arbitrary individual color in the color space with one of the plural representative colors according to the composite distance indices, and preparing a lookup table storing the correspondence between each arbitrary individual color and the plural representative colors". The closest prior art, Takaha (USPN 6,021,221), discloses wherein a central processing circuit firstly subdivides the basic image into a plurality of division regions which are like in color, in units of pixel groups, subsequently, the central processing circuit calculates distances between pixels within the division region and pixels within the contour region, and also calculates positions of pixels with respect to the initial region, and then determines factor values for the respective pixels on the basis of distance values indicative of the distance and the position; while Maggioni (USPN 5,828,779), discloses method for constructing a color table in a computer unit for the classification of picture elements in an image, either singularly or in combination, fail to anticipate or render the above underlined limitation obvious.

- Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Contact Information

- Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Amir Alavi whose telephone number is 571-272-7386.
- The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thu.. 8:00 am thru 6:30pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Joseph Mancuso can be reached on 571-272-7695.
- The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-283-7300. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.
- For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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Group Art Unit 2621
05 December 2005



ANDREW W. JOHNS
PRIMARY EXAMINER